

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A vessel for contacting a plurality of objects with a fluid and including at least one bottom wall inclined downwardly from at least one sidewall to an inlet for providing an upwardly directed stream of fluid, and a distribution shield arranged in spaced relation to the bottom wall. The fluid stream causes the objects to flow upward from a moving bed thereof to a disengaging position. The distribution shield has an upper surface inclined downwardly and extending away from the vicinity of the object disengaging position to a return position such that disengaged objects fall on the upper surface of the distribution shield and move downward thereon to the return position from which they fall onto an upper portion of the inclined bottom wall and move downward thereon to a feed position. The vessel may be used for treating objects that are at least partially electrically conductive, wherein the fluid is a liquid electrolyte and the apparatus further includes an electrode positioned to contact the moving bed and a counterelectrode positioned in spaced relation to the moving bed. The vessel may be fixed or portable.